

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A postage meter comprising:  
a print head;  
a purge unit for removing ink from the print head; and  
an ink tray assembly for receiving ink removed from the print head by the purge unit;  
wherein the ink tray assembly includes:  
a tray having an opening; and  
a cover membrane across the opening of the tray.
2. The postage meter according to claim 1, wherein the ink tray assembly also includes:  
an absorbent pad held in the tray under the cover membrane.
3. The postage meter according to claim 2, further comprising a hole in the cover membrane for sealing to a port of the purge unit.
4. The postage meter according to claim 3, wherein the absorbent pad has a channel therein positioned in alignment with the hole in the cover membrane.
5. The postage meter according to claim 4, wherein the tray includes a post extending upwardly from a floor of the tray and engaged by the channel in the absorbent pad.

6. The postage meter according to claim 1, further comprising a hole in the cover membrane for sealing to a port of the purge unit.
7. The postage meter according to claim 1, wherein the cover membrane includes at least one of polypropylene and polyethylene.
8. The postage meter according to claim 1, wherein the cover membrane is formed at least in part as a bellows.
9. The postage meter according to claim 1, wherein the cover membrane is of a material adapted to allow vapor to pass through the material and to substantially prevent waste ink from passing through the material.
10. The postage meter according to claim 9, wherein the material includes at least one of polypropylene and polyethylene.
11. A postage meter comprising:
  - a print head;
  - a purge unit for removing ink from the print head; and
  - an ink tray assembly for receiving ink removed from the print head by the purge unit;wherein the ink tray assembly includes:
  - a tray; and

barrier means, bonded to a rim of the tray, for substantially preventing waste ink from exiting the tray upon tipping of the tray.

12. The postage meter according to claim 11, wherein the barrier means includes a membrane that substantially closes an opening of the tray.

13. The postage meter according to claim 12, wherein the ink tray assembly also includes:

an absorbent pad held in the tray under the membrane.

14. The postage meter according to claim 13, further comprising a hole in the membrane for sealing to a port of the purge unit.

15. The postage meter according to claim 14, wherein the absorbent pad has a channel therein positioned in alignment with the hole in the membrane.

16. The postage meter according to claim 15, wherein the tray includes a post extending upwardly from a floor of the tray and engaged by the channel in the absorbent pad.

17. The postage meter according to claim 12, wherein the membrane includes at least one of polypropylene and polyethylene.

18. The postage meter according to claim 12, wherein the membrane is formed at least in part as a bellows.

19. The postage meter according to claim 11, wherein the barrier means includes a material adapted to allow vapor to pass through the material.
20. A waste ink tray assembly for use in a postage meter, the assembly comprising:  
a tray;  
an absorbent pad held in the tray; and  
barrier means, bonded to a rim of the tray, for substantially preventing waste ink from exiting the tray upon tipping of the tray.
21. The waste ink tray assembly according to claim 20, wherein the barrier means includes a membrane that substantially closes an opening of the tray.
22. The waste ink tray assembly according to claim 21, further comprising a hole in the membrane for sealing to a port of a waste ink purge unit.
23. The waste ink tray assembly according to claim 22, wherein the absorbent pad has a channel therein positioned in alignment with the hole in the membrane.
24. The waste ink tray assembly according to claim 23, wherein the tray includes a post extending upwardly from a floor of the tray and engaged by the channel in the absorbent pad.
25. The waste ink tray assembly according to claim 21, wherein the membrane includes at least one of polypropylene and polyethylene.

26. The waste ink tray assembly according to claim 21, wherein the membrane is formed at least in part as a bellows.

27. The waste ink tray assembly according to claim 20, wherein the barrier means includes a material adapted to allow vapor to pass through the material.